



# Apprenticeships

# **EMPLOYER** (Non-Levy)

## BUSINESS TOOLKIT FOR RECRUITING AND EMPLOYING APPRENTICES

# THE INTERVIEW

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When interviewing apprentice candidates, it's useful to bear in mind that they might not have much professional experience. Therefore, the questions need to be tailored to finding out about their personal achievements.

You may well have your own but detailed below are a few tried and tested examples:

1. Tell me what you know about our company?
2. Why have you applied for this apprenticeship?
3. What do you think we want from our apprentice?
4. Apprenticeships mean working full time alongside studying for a qualification. How will you prioritise your workload?
5. Give an example when you have worked independently.
6. Give an example when you have worked as part of a team.
7. Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
8. What questions do you have for us?

# INDUCTION ESSENTIALS

It's your apprentice's first day at your company. They might be nervous, understandably. Many apprentices tend to be of school leaving age, so this might well be their first time in a working environment.

You've invested in this person. Their CV was at the top of the pile and they beat others during the interview process. The last thing you want is for them to feel uncomfortable or unsupported, and then leave before completing their apprenticeship.

The first week is therefore, very important. You should take steps to integrate the apprentice fully into your company by getting to know them, giving them tasks relevant to their post, and providing on-going support.

Set significant, meaningful tasks which they can get stuck in to and ensure that they feel able to ask any questions if they run into trouble. Appoint a mentor who can act as the first point of contact for the apprentice. Perhaps they were an apprentice themselves who has stayed with the company.

Above all, be supportive and set clear targets that the apprentice can work towards. Hold regular meetings to discuss the apprentice's progress and find out how they are getting on. This way, you will ensure that the apprentice feels comfortable which will ultimately increase loyalty and lessen the chance of them abandoning ship.

We have developed an induction checklist that you can adapt for your company induction.

Area	Comments	Sign & Date
Welcome		
Company information and culture		
Your role and why we want you		
Key members of staff and responsibilities		
Your supervisor/mentor		
Other Apprentices/Buddy system		
Facilities and IT equipment		
Holidays, benefits and policies		
Sickness and absence: what to do		
Health and Safety: your responsibilities		
Reporting accident/PPE/tools & equipment		
Disciplinary procedures		
Period/Next Review		

# MENTORING

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You should provide regular support to your apprentice throughout their time with the company. You can provide this support by making clear the goals you expect of them and being patient and willing to answer any questions the apprentice may have to assist in their learning.

This support can also be provided in the form of a mentor. Businesses that have a mentor programme report that it improves job performance and helps staff (and apprenticeship) retention. Mentors are on hand to offer the apprentice advice and information, and to work closely with both employer and apprentice to solve any problems which might hinder the apprentice's learning.

Mentoring is particularly important for young apprentices as it likely to be their first time in a working environment .

## Choosing a mentor

Choose a mentor who has had similar experiences to the apprentice; perhaps they once were an apprentice themselves. A mentor should also typically be able to:

- Listen actively and give constructive feedback
- Build rapport easily
- Set realistic targets
- Offer support and guidance
- Be a good role model

There is a wealth of literature on the subject of mentoring and it may not be for everyone in your workforce. If you are interested in developing mentoring skills within your organisation talk to us about mentor training your staff.

# WIDER SUPPORT SERVICES

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West Herts College, offers a number of support services to support apprentices through their qualification, we've highlighted some of the key opportunities available to apprentices:

**Learning Resource Centres:** the Study Skills team can support apprentices through one-to-one study sessions, helping them brush up on a particular topic, proof-reading their assignments or help them with referencing.

**Specialist English and maths teachers:** if studying English or maths, we can provide apprentices with support revising or go through more complex topics in detail to help them achieve their functional skills qualifications.

**Student Support:** available to all apprentices, the support team are available to talk about financial worries, personal issues or advise on progression opportunities.

# ABSENCE AND PERFORMANCE

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## Reporting absence

As your training provider West Herts College is required to maintain records of any absences, therefore if your apprentice is absent from work you must inform us.

If your apprentice has 4 weeks or more continuous non-attendance (due to sickness, maternity/paternity leave, religious observance etc), withdrawal from training procedures apply. This will include establishing if the apprentice has a genuine intention to return to training.

## Performance guidelines

Poor performance should of course be addressed and it is essential that all apprentices receive regular constructive feedback and clear guidance on areas for improvement.

It is however, very important to consider that apprentices are usually inexperienced individuals (which is reflected in their salary) and therefore, on occasions will need extra support, guidance and patience than would be expected for a regular employee.

Our staff are always willing to give advice and support on these matters. If appropriate, apprentices should be subject to the same discipline and grievance procedures as other members of your organisation.

# WHAT NEXT?

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Once your apprentice completes their apprenticeship training you may wish to employ them as a full time member of staff. In this case normal employment rules will apply including National Minimum Wage.

If, however, it is not the intention to retain the apprentice, it is anticipated that you as the employer, and West Herts College will give the individual all the relevant support to find new employment, including time off for attending interviews.

## Progression

Many apprentices, after completing their apprenticeship, will be ready for full-time employment with you. If you wish to continue their training by taking the next step take a look at the levels of progression below.

Get in touch with us to discuss opportunities for your employees.

Name	Level	Equivalent educational level
Intermediate	2	5 GCSE A*-C or 9-4
Advanced	3	2 A levels or Level 3 BTEC Extended Diploma
Higher	4	HNC
Higher	5	HND or Foundation Degree
Degree	6 & 7	Bachelor's or Master's degree

## Apprenticeships

For further information please visit:  
[westherts.ac.uk/apprenticeships](http://westherts.ac.uk/apprenticeships)

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